

REMARKS

In response to dependent claims 2 and 3 being indicated as allowable, claim 2 has been rewritten in independent form. Claim 3 remains dependent upon claim 2. Formal corrective amendments have also been made to a few words of claims 1, 16 and 20.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1 and 4 as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) by U.S. patent no. 5,491,804 ("Heath") is respectfully requested. The claim limitation that the command circuit is "connected to one of the plurality of sockets at a time" (claim 1, last line) when unique addresses are being set in the individual cards appears to have been overlooked in the Office Action. An illustration of this is shown in Figure 4 of the present application.

The function of the "address factor" AD stored in the register 21 of each card in Heath is not completely understood but appears to identify the portion of the overall system address space allocated to the individual card. In any event, the contents of register 21 of a particular card are loaded by the host over the bus 17, which is connected with all the card sockets 2-0 through 2-7 at all times. See Heath, Figure 1. An individual card is selected to receive data for its register 21 from the bus 17 by selecting one of the card enable lines EC0 – EC7 connected to that card. See Heath, col. 3, lns. 42-48. This use of the card enable lines EC1 – EC7 to enable communication of one of the cards 5-0 through 5-7 at a time with the common bus 17 is quite different from the claimed technique of connecting a command circuit to one card socket at a time.

The distinction between these different approaches has already been described in the present application. See application "Summary of the Invention," specifically p. 5, lns. 15 – 18. The selective connection of the command circuit to the individual card sockets, as claimed, allows the resulting card to be backward compatible with the MMC card. This would not be the case if the card enable signals of the Heath reference were added to the single command circuit of the prior art system shown in the present application Figure 3.

The cited Heath reference also describes permanent I/O card identification numbers (IDs) that are hard-wired during manufacture. See Heath, col. 1, ln. 27, and col. 3, ln. 9. These are not relevant to the present claims since they are not at all definable.

Accordingly, it is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance and an early indication of its allowance is solicited. However, if the Examiner has any further matters

that need to be resolved, a telephone call to the undersigned attorney at 415-318-1163 would be appreciated.

EXPRESS MAIL

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Respectfully submitted,



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May 18, 2004

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